# The Seed Sower.

*A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.*

VOL. VIII. No. 5. JULY, 1900. ONE PENNY.

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## Come to me.

Come to me, come to me, O my God;
Come to me everywhere!
Let the trees mean Thee, and the grassy sod,
And the water and the air.

For Thou art so far that I often doubt,
As on every side I stare,
Searching within, and looking without,
If Thou art anywhere.

How did men find Thee in days of old?
How did they grow so sure?
They fought in Thy name, they were glad and bold,
They suffered, and kept themselves pure.

But now they say—neither above the sphere,
Nor down in the heart of man,
But only in fancy, ambition, or fear,
The thought of Thee began.

If only the perfect tale were true,
Which, with touch of sunny gold,
Of the ancient wrong makes one anew,
And simplicity manifold.

But *He* said that they who did His word
The truth of it should know;
I will try to do it—if He be Lord,
Perhaps the old spring will flow;

Perhaps the old spirit-wind will blow
That He promised to their prayer;
And doing Thy will I yet shall know
Thee, Father, everywhere.

GEO. MACDONALD.

## Elijah.

A SERMON BY THE

REV. BERNARD SNELL, M.A.

"Not in the storm and fire does God rejoice,
Of law and judgment; but in Jesu's face,
He wins us with the mystery of meekness."

—RICHARD WILTON.

Amid the gains of the higher criticism may be reckoned the firm conclusion that the chroniclers of the Old Testament were not "scientific historians." They made their stories the vehicle of religious truth.

Like that of Joseph, the story of Elijah thrilled the national heart; it became a popular epic repeated by fathers to their children, probably varied by generations of repetition, until it was stereotyped in the form familiar to us. Elijah stood in the popular esteem next to Moses. Champion of the old theocracy, he became the nucleus of rabbinical traditions. He lived in the imagination of the people: indeed they thought that he would return, just as other people have expected the coming of Barbarossa or King Arthur. The last word of the Old Testament is that of Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet." The question put to John the Baptist was, "Art thou Elijah?"

Christ's word on the cross, "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani," immediately suggested to the by-standers, "He calleth for Elias." At every circumcision to-day, a chair is left vacant for Elijah, as guardian of the old rites; at the Pass-over, a door is opened in hope of his entry; when property is in dispute among Jews, they are wont to say, "Put it aside till Elijah comes." This all shows how deeply Elijah was stamped on the Hebrew mind as the defender of ancient customs. "Elijah shall come and restore all things." He was regarded as a super-human personage, so that James the Apostle used no superfluous truism when he wrote, "Elijah was a man of like passions to ourselves."

In so remote an age, it is very difficult for us to separate the historic threads in a national epic. "Elijah" means "Jehovah is my God." That seems to be the key to Elijah's story. That is the idea that runs through his mission and makes the epic a unity. He was a protestant, a puritan, sternly standing by the old paths, never fearing the face of man. But he had no new truth to proclaim. A man of action rather than of words, bent on restoring the old foundations; a Hebrew of the Hebrews, staunch in his adherence to ancient forms, and harsh in his intolerance of all beside; a man of one idea, as prophets usually are—not nice people to live with perhaps. The work of righteousness is rarely done by your moderate, nice-balanced men; the work of righteousness has almost always been effected by one-sided men, by brusque zealots who have too little patience with quiet folk as guiltless as themselves of kissing Baal. We have to reckon with this fact that the rough work of reformation in this world of ours, has to be done by lop-sided men: by men who exaggerate in one direction.

Elijah faced paganism with fiery force: his soul was aflame for Jehovah; his words flashed forth with bitter scorn. As we read in Ecclesiasticus, "Elijah stood up as fire, and his word was burning as a torch." He was the prophet of fire. The legends tell that he was born and swaddled in fire, that he brought fire down from heaven, that he was swept up in fire beyond the clouds.

Elijah appeared to his contemporaries like an incarnation of God's consuming fire; to us he remains the impersonation of the genius of the Hebrew religion, the champion of "Jehovah, before whom I stand." And that characteristic phrase is the *motif* of Elijah's career.

The historical setting is easily given. Ahab, king of the northern division of the tribes, in order to strengthen his position, contracted an alliance with Phœnicia and married Princess Jezebel (the aunt of Dido, who founded Carthage). Jezebel—that is, "loved of Baal"—stands in the story as the embodiment of the Phœnician spirit. Ahab, like Solomon, honoured the gods of his consort; so much was due to friendship with the people of Baal; even if it were not the sole condition on which he received the hand of the Tyrian princess, that the worship of Baal should be established in Israel. By that alliance, Ahab was firmly seated in power in Samaria. Despotism, which we usually associate with his name, meant oppression for the people. That barbaric palace of Indian ivory at Samaria implied extortion from the peasantry. That spiritless submission of the elders of Jezreel before Jezebel's orders, in the matter of Naboth, shows how they cowered before her, how by that unjust deed they proved themselves the mere thralls of that strong queen. Jezebel was paramount over her poor, weak husband. She was of that order of masterful, unscrupulous women who, when highly placed, leave a deep mark in the annals of a nation. That rebellion of the country folk under Jehu meant provincial disaffection, just as did the revolt of the German peasantry in Luther's time, or the rising of the English peasants under Wat Tyler. Memories of better and freer days were fresh in the hearts of the people. There was a strain of democratic feeling come down from the time when there was as yet no king in Israel; and it was only with difficulty that a despot could bend the Hebrew theocracy to his ends.

Ahab was not allowed to advance his profligate power without protest. Prophets lifted up their voices against the wickedness of the court and the heathenism of its ways. Wherever an altar of Jehovah stood, wherever there was a school of prophets—there was opposition to the king. To them the root of all mischief lay in those pagan innovations: to them the decay of liberties so dear was due to Baal-worship which this foreign queen had introduced. It was *her* coming that they blamed for all heathen riot and unaccustomed tyranny. She was ruling the kingdom:

she had moulded her husband to her will, and she would debauch the nation with heathen filth and riot. She it was who had levelled Jehovah's altars as centres of sedition, who had silenced all protests by massacring the protestants. She was the first leader of religious persecution that the Bible contains. Such blood-guiltiness appalled the people, yet apparently most of them were too supine, or too servile to resist. "She slew the prophets of the Lord." And their death-cry thrilled the soul of Elijah: he came forth the embodiment of those dead men —"Jehovah is my God."

His entrance is no less mysterious than his exit. Like Melchizedek, he appears without father, without mother, without descent; like John the Baptist, he had been in the desert and the wilderness until the day of his showing unto Israel. *Then* he became the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Himself a son of the highlands, shaggy and sinewy as a Bedouin, wearing a rough mantle of sheep-skin, he crashed into the midst with denunciations of the royal policy and with a summons to the nation to withdraw from their complicity with paganism. "Ye cannot serve God and Baal; there must be no divided heart in God's service: Jehovah is my God." He hated Baalism as the old Cromwellians hated image-worship, and like them he had only one hope of a reformed state, a pure religion.

Of course, Ahab sent to seize him; but in vain. Elijah did not lack sympathisers. The royal emissaries were foiled again and again, and in chagrin they destroyed villages that had sheltered the prophet. And then the narrator, quite powerless to say how the prophet managed to avoid arrest, briefly submits that God protected His messenger. He who feeds the ravens caused the fowls of the air to nourish him in hiding amid the inaccessible cliffs of a Jordan gorge. And finally—it is a wonderful touch—Elijah had to seek shelter in Tyre itself, that is, where Baalism was in force and whence Jezebel had come. To that land Elijah, was driven by hunger; and in that land, Elijah, the denouncer of the heathenism by the irony of fate, owed his life to the humanity of a poor heathen widow, an idolatress such as those against whom he continually inveighed as the enemies of God. By her charity he shared her scanty sustenance until the time of famine was past. When the heavens were as brass, and the earth was as iron, common calamity conciliated deadly foes.

At the end of two years, Ahab sent Obadiah, his vizier, to impound this "troubler of Israel." Suddenly Elijah confronted him; and the trembling minister fell on his face before him, "Is it thou, my lord Elijah?" "It is I; go tell thy lord, behold Elijah is here." And then, standing before the king, Elijah appeals, as every student of Hebrew history understands at once, from the king to the people. And Elijah having thus appealed in the name of God, Ahab allowed the appeal; and he summoned to Carmel what may be called a "constituent assembly," a reminiscence of the "great congregation" which had not met since the disruption of the kingdom.

To the gathered clans the prophet makes his great overture, "Will ye serve God or Baal?" It was the crowning hour of Elijah's life. Alone, against a multitude, he stood before the people in the name of God.

> "Among the faithless, faithful only he—
> Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified."

The fire of God had burnt out from him all faithless fear; he yearned to extirpate idolatry, to recall those people to the God of their fathers. They had no clear conviction on the great issue: they were as sheep having no shepherd, but they dimly understood their king's compromise of principle with policy. That they did grasp vaguely. And Elijah said, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Jehovah is my God: He is a jealous God, He will have your whole service or none. How long will ye stand first on one foot, then on the other? If Jehovah be your God, follow Him. If Baal, follow him. There is no compromise, take your side."

That dramatic scene has been woven for us with imperishable music by the genius of Mendelssohn. Elijah's challenge to the priests of the sun-god was that their god should answer from the blazing sky; it was perfectly fair, and they accepted the challenge. "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God!" With dancing and contortions the devotees of Baal went through the frantic dervish-like ritual by which they hoped to move their deity. Their wild invocations touch our hearts with pity, but they only moved Elijah's grim humour to biting sarcasm

and savage taunts. He stands there with fearful glee in his heart; he mocks them with words we cannot translate, "Come, cry aloud, he sleeps, he is on a journey."

"Tall, eager, lean and strong, his cloak wind-borne
Behind, his forehead heavenly bright."

"O, for a sculptor's hand,
That thou might'st take thy stand,
Thy wild hair floating on the Eastern breeze."

Hour succeeds hour: they shriek and leap in frenzy until at last their paroxysms have exhausted their powers, and they fall in collapse. "There was no voice nor cry that answered," and their sun-god was near to setting. Then Elijah has his hour of exulting triumph. The familiar tale is told vividly; the falling fire of God, and the bloody end of the day, how, sword in hand, Elijah slew the unresisting prophets of Baal, who could not have been conscious impostors, and should have been spared that awful fate. But there was not a shadow of such a thought in Elijah's mind, and no such thing as pity seems to have occurred to the people. We read the story as told by a writer of two centuries later without a word of censure. "He slew them before the Lord."

Dean Farrar tells us that before the Prussian Court at an Evangelical Conference in Berlin in 1855, *Anno Domini* 1855, a preacher said, "Did not Elijah slaughter the priests of Baal? Christianity is the religion of intolerance, and its kernel is exclusiveness." When one reads that, one is almost sorry that this story remains in the Bible for dull fools to misunderstand.

And then, as the night fell upon that scene, a blinding storm swept up from the Mediterranean, the drought was ended by the rain of God's compassion. The prophet was vindicated, and the king was terrified. And what else? The priests were slain. And what else? Nothing! Nothing!

We look back on those unenlightened Israelites and pity them for their superstitious ordeal by fire, for their testing by fire their gods. But that fire with which Savonarola was to have made good his cause against his foes, comes with bitterness to our minds. I cannot help thinking too, of the mechanical prayer-tests which were proposed a few years ago by a sober English professor. And we know how, under various names, there is a feverish desire for signs which neither Christ nor civilisation seems able to extirpate from human minds. Jesus conquered that temptation Himself, and said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." How frequently He had to rebuke the tendency in others; and how many of His disciples still have to learn that they have no right to think that God will answer their appeals for portents! Brethren, fundamentally all such craving is scepticism and faithlessness. Were the prayer granted it were truly futile, as was poor Elijah's. Do you not remember, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear though one were raised from the dead?" And Christ understood the human heart when he laid down that principle.

Elijah's appeal to the nation failed. His triumph was short-lived, and the people went straight back to heathenism. No reformation has ever been wrought by one dramatic stroke. Jezebel was not convinced, and she was the fulcrum of the situation. Jezebel did not believe in the fire from heaven and the rain from the sea. And a very strange fact is that a pagan historian, Menander, afterwards relates that the drought was ended by the prayers and sacrifices of the king in Tyre, who was priest and king of Baal, Jezebel's father. That was what she believed, and she swore that Elijah should die. Thenceforward it was to be war to the knife: the prophet fled to the desert. He had not fulfilled his hopes: he knew that he had failed.

Away in Horeb the play of the great forces of nature imaged the conflict of his spirit: that despairing man learnt, that no fire on Carmel, that no Mediterranean storm, no avenging sword, no wrath of man can work the righteousness of God. That is the meaning of that parable in Horeb; for parable it is, perhaps the most impressive of all Hebrew literature. It is well to remember that elsewhere in the Old Testament it is through the tempest that God is revealed and that He answers out of the whirlwind. It is not at all strange that men have thought that the roar of a hurricane was the trump of an archangel: that men have listened for God in a storm: that when the earth trembles, God sends abroad His arrows and the light of His glittering spear: that, when the heavens rattle with thunder, it is the sound of God's passing. Man quails thereat. No man is an atheist in a storm.

But it is not in these things that God works. It is in the still small voice of justice, Elijah: it is in the still small voice of truth, Elijah, that the Divine Presence is felt.

Mark, that in exactly the same place in which Moses, his great predecessor, had learnt that God is "full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth," the voiceful silence taught Elijah

> "God's passionless reformers, influences
> That purify and heal and are not seen:"

that gentleness is the habitation of God's throne, that His purposes are not served by fire and fury, that force is no remedy. And He, our Master, whose cry was not heard in the streets, who went about doing good among the sick and sinful; He, whose irresistible meekness has won the whole world to His side, whose might was most manifest in the awful stillness of His sufferings on the cross, is the "still, small voice" of God made flesh: not a prophet red-handed with slaughter, nor a prophet standing on Carmel-top praying for fire.

I suppose there is no one who can miss the lesson of Elijah's life. It was Christ Himself who declared it. Two of His disciples would fain have called down fire from heaven on their opponents, as did Elijah: and Christ said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: the Son of Man is come to save men's lives, not to destroy them." The spirit of Elijah is not the spirit of Christ. Of all the prophets he was the farthest from the evangelical spirit.

But for all that, which must by Christians never be forgotten, and for all the detritus of legend, and for all the fearful trail of blood over his history, we must not be blind to the fact that Elijah made his strong manly protest against heathenism. The weird fascination of idolatry has gone from the civilised world never to return. The prophets of God by their loyal devotion and courageous confidence have wrought that for us, and we owe them thanks. But we owe also earnest heed to their noble words. Still the stirring appeal from their great hearts comes to us with our vacillating purposes and our mean ambitions. "Choose your God You cannot live on the border-line; far above all party-politics, for above all party-religion is the one great issue which makes the world the battle-ground of good and evil, of truth and error, of God and Baal." And that appeal comes in the Carmel of each man's own soul.

> "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide
> In the strife of Truth and Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
> Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
> Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
> And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light.
> Then to side with Truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,
> 'Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
> Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
> Doubting in his abject spirit, 'till his Lord is crucified,
> And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.
> Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment hath passed by,
> Careless seems the great Avenger: history's pages but record,
> One death grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word,
> Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne;
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

## Onward, Christian Soldiers!

"The battle of life is not now, so often as of old, thrust upon us from without; it does not give us the first blow, which it were poltroonery to fly; but it is internal and invisible; *it has to be sought and found by voluntary enterprise;* it is not with palpable flesh and blood beneath the sun, but with viewless spirits, that cling to us in the dark."—*Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 381.

This sentence is from a sermon by Dr. Martineau, entitled "The Good Soldier of Jesus Christ." The italics are mine, and are meant to emphasise the fact that the battle with the "viewless spirits" of evil is "*to be sought and found by voluntary enterprise.*" It must be distinctly and definitely determined. Vague sentiment about it must be caught, and concentrated, and translated into reality. "Thus the

primitive conflict with nature, which makes a Hercules, rises into the conflict with man, which makes the hero, and culminates in that infinitely higher conflict with the spirit of evil, which is impersonated in Christ." Impersonated in Christ, and thus a vital indispensable element in all Christian discipleship. A truism, do you say? Yes, and like some truisms ignored and neglected, relegated to the museum of Christian imagery, borrowed to give fervour to a hymn, or picturesqueness to a sermon. Ah, those hymns! What a martial heroic note is struck in some of them. "Am I a soldier of the Cross?" A pertinent question indeed to all who sing it, or hear it sung, but dismissed as mere poetry. "Soldiers of Christ, arise!" Perhaps it is about time they did, and to some purpose. "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war." So the dear children are taught to sing, and they sing it with delightful fervour, their emotions stimulated by the last box of tin soldiers; but as to teaching them when they get older that it means something, that there *is* a war which they must enlist for if they would be true soldiers, that is entirely neglected in most cases.

In most cases, not in all, as I am warned by the throbs of a Salvation Army drum. What a miracle that recalls. One man perceives this neglected military element in Christian discipleship, perceiving it, he believes in it, and appeals to it. Behold the result! In a few years a world-wide organisation, doing a wonderful religious and social work. You do not like its theology. Nor do I. Its theology is repulsive to us, but all the more amazing the power and fertility of the idea that called it into being.

That idea is not exhausted, and it is not necessarily associated with fourth-rate Methodist theology. Convince a number of persons that they have a battle to fight for the kingdom of God, unite them by some organisation which shall create an *esprit de corps*, which shall wisely direct, as well as stimulate, and you have a power for good which can do much.

You will thus utilise for a good object that military element which otherwise is dissipated, or turned to wasteful destruction: that element without which, in St. Paul and others, Christianity itself would have vanished like a beautiful dream.

"But would you advocate the formation of a Unitarian Salvation Army?" I would advocate the formation of a Legion of Soldiers of the Kingdom of God. I would catch the young when possible, but no real fighter, whether young or old, who would submit to the requirement would be denied. The requirement should be some definite service for the kingdom of God, to be reported at intervals. The enlistment should be for a term of not less than three years.

Is there not room for such an organisation in the Free Churches? Could it not be made attractive to the young? Could it not be made to appeal to the best that is in them? Would it not help to irradicate that vague easy-goingness; that go-as-you-please indifferentism, which is the blighting curse of our movement?

Think of some of the scattered outposts of our faith. Is not their existence a struggle: just the kind of struggle to call for the military spirit? There is the immense social pressure, and commonly the disheartening knowledge that more than one leading member of the Free Church has succumbed to it.

On the one hand there is the Parish Church, on the other populous orthodox Nonconformity. Between them is the congregation which belongs to neither, which has its traditions, and its ideal, with generally a dwindling band of supporters. The traditions, through the dim haze of the past, loom large, the ideal gets vague, mixed, and somewhat dim. The few remaining supporters are chiefly held together by a dogged determination, which is more heroic than attractive. Dogged determination is a valuable military quality, but it must be blended with others to make the "happy warrior"—with vigour, and dash, and enterprise. And holding the fort requires all them. Such a congregation as a rule sadly needs an intelligence department, and its scouting is usually ill done, or not done at all. A more military spirit would save many a congregation from ruin.

But would the only object of such a movement be to save a few isolated churches from extinction?

If such churches are really working for the kingdom of God, that would be no such paltry attainment; but it is not all, for the churches by no means include all the efforts to that end. These efforts may be summed up as for mercy against cruelty, for justice against injustice, for

temperance against intemperance, for purity against impurity. These viewless spirits of good and evil are at war. Some may think that they can maintain a "lawyer-like impartiality" in the fight, but it is impossible. Many, it is true, have never awakened to the reality of the struggle, and drift unconsciously with whatever tide is strongest; but they need awakening, and the professed Christian discipleship that has not awakened them is indeed a sham, which needs replacing by something more real.

To awaken some of these from foolish trifling to conscious effort, however feeble, in some good cause: to band them together in willing union with soldiers of more experience in the war: to give direction, encouragement, sympathy, to banish even for solitary workers the feeling of isolation—these should be the objects of such an organisation.

This corn of wheat, which has abode alone since April 26th, I now give into the hand of the *Seed Sower* who will scatter it far and wide. Whether it perish or bring forth much fruit is as God wills.* CLEMENT E. PIKE.

[* The Editor will be glad to receive from friends any hints, suggestions, or criticisms on Mr. Pike's idea of the semi-military organisation of our young people for Church purposes ]

## Be of Good Cheer.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF SALIS BY RUTH WILLS.

See how the days brighten sunnily o'er us,
Blue is the sky, and the country how fair;
Grief would make discord in Nature's sweet chorus,
Nature in spring doth no sorrow garb wear.
Lift up thy glances, cast earthward in sadness,
Beauty abundant thy rapture invites,
Wisdom's own goal as her guerdon is gladness,
Even stern virtue with gladness unites.

Open thy soul to the joy that surrounds thee,
Hark, it resounds in the linnet's sweet lay,
Breathe, 'tis in fragrance the rose sheds around thee,
List how it murmurs the brooklet's wild way.
Taste, in the nectar of grapes it is flowing,
Flavours the feast which the peasants regale;
See how in beauty of colours all glowing
It paints the fair landscape of mountain and vale.

Ah, friends! what avails it, this ceaseless bemoaning,
Deem you it manly such weakness to show?
Would you thus drearily weeping and groaning
Down to the grave in your feebleness go?

Much that is noble invites your pursuing,
Much that is good yet remains to be done;
Peace and serenity follow well-doing,
Striving once over our rest will be won.

Manifold trials, and burdens, and sorrows
Press on us sorely as onward we go,
Healing from hope still the saddest heart borrows,
Patience and strength from endurance will flow.
When the wild storms of affliction o'ertake thee
Look to the heavens which over thee bend;
Let not thy faith or thy courage forsake thee,
All things shall work for thy good in the end.

Joyfully gaze on the works of creation,
'Twill to thy soul its lost gladness recall;
Peace will return to thy sad supplication,
But the joy from well-doing is greatest of all.
Yield thee to love, 'tis the sweetest compelling,
So thou love only the things that endure,
Love that will ever with wisdom be dwelling,
Love of the noble, the true, and the pure.

Act, for in action is wisdom's revealing,
Honours undying are found in her train,
Live so each day that thy deeds may be sealing
All the brief, fugitive moments with gain.
In thy home circle bring brightness and blessing,
Cheer and be helpful to all as you may,
That will ensure thee joy's sweetest caressing,
That will make splendid life's gloomiest day.

Courage, afflictions, when once they are over,
Leave the spirit refreshed as the meadows by dew,
And graves which the shadowy cypress wreaths cover
Ere long will be bright with forget-me-not blue.
Then let us rejoice, 'tis the will of our Father;
Joy that is pure never kindles regret,
Roses from thorns it will teach us to gather,
And death when appearing with smiles will be met.


# The Seed Sower;

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

FOR THE HOME, THE SCHOOL, AND THE CHURCH.

Localised by Essex Church, London; All Souls, Belfast; Unity Church, London; Great Meeting, Leicester; Mansfield; The Western Union (all the churches); Kidderminster; Old Meeting, Church of the Messiah, and Hurst Street Mission, Birmingham; and other places.

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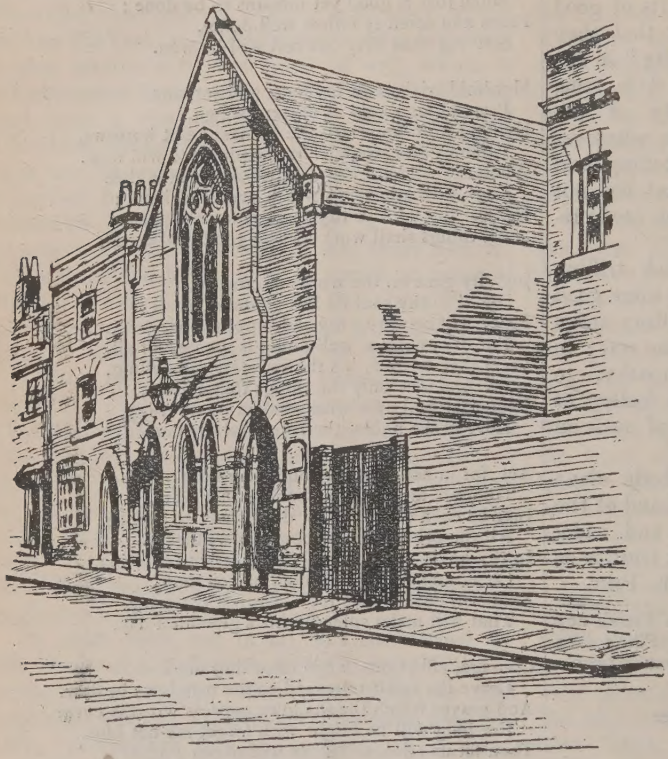
# ❧ OUR ✣ ANCIENT ✣ CHAPELS. ❧



## XII.—General Baptist Chapel, Portsmouth.

The General Baptist Chapel, Portsmouth, is situate in St. Thomas's Street, Portsmouth, formerly one of the principal streets of the town; now, with the changes made in modern times, it is left behind, whilst the chief streets will be found elsewhere. The history of the Baptists in Portsmouth, as far as we have been able to trace it, dates back to the year 1640. In that year the Rev. John Sicklemore came to Portsmouth, his disbelief in infant baptism having caused him to abandon a good living at Singleton. First of all he went to Chichester, where they would scarcely give him a hearing; indeed, his goods were thrown into the street. Through his exertions a congregation was privately gathered together in Portsmouth to worship God. In 1645 Thomas Lamb came to Portsmouth, and though he was often imprisoned he boldly preached the teachings of the Baptists in this old town. After him came Thomas Collier, who was also imprisoned in Portsmouth. He was succeeded by Mr. Wentworth, who is regarded as the first "pastor" or "elder" of the church in Portsmouth. Mr. Richard Drinkwater, described as a tobacconist in the early deed of this meeting-house (of which he became a trustee) was his successor. It is noticeable that nearly all the first preachers were laymen, whose unpaid services met with a good reception in these trying times. The isolation of Baptists, arising from their peculiar tenets, rendered a trained ministry difficult to sustain.

Mr. Richard Drinkwater preached many years, and was well beloved for his piety, prudence, and good behaviour to the last. He was a great sufferer for conscience sake. At one time he was a prisoner for eighteen months, and he suffered many fines and persecutions. There is more than one reference to this fearless preacher in the records of the Corporation. Under date 6th February, 1677, we find the following:—

"Memorand: That the day and yeare aforesaid before us—Samuel Williams, Esq., Mayor, and Nicholas Hedger, gent, one of his Mat'ies Justices of the Peace of the said Burrough, Richard Drinkwater, confessing himselfe to be a Recusant to the Church of England, and thereupon being committed to prison for refusing to take ye oath of allegiance, this day came into open cort, and did submit himselfe to take ye oath of allegiance—according to ye form of the statue in that case made and provided, which was ministered unto him, And in testimony hereof he hath hereunto subscribed his hand ye day and yeare abovesaid.—Richard Drinkwater."

Again, from the same records we give quotations to show that several persons were convicted in 1677. The entry is as under:—

"Richard Drinkwater, for preaching and teaching at eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Sunday, twentieth day of Octob., 1677, information was given unto us Henry

Beverley, Esq., Mayor, Samuell Williams and Phillip James, gent., Justices of ye Peace of ye said Burrough, upon the oathes of Thomas Fleming and Thomas Nixon, that Richard Drinkwater, of Portesmouth aforesaid, yeoman, was found by them about eleven o'clock in ye fournoone of ye same day preaching and teaching in a seditious conventicle or meeting, held at a certain house belonging to William Cozen, within ye said Burrough, where there were assembled and met together Thomas Boulton, Stephen Knowles, Robert Smith, Thomas Crowder, — Drinkwater, Margaret Cozen, — ffishbourne, and John Collier, being above ye number of five persons over and beside them of ye said household, every one of them being above ye age of sixteen years and subjects of this realme, to hear the said Drinkwater, who were there assembled and met together under pretext of exercise of Religion in other manner than according to ye liturgy and practice of ye Church of England, and contrary to ye late Act of Parliament in that case made and provided intituled An Act to Prevent and Suppress Seditious Conventicles made in ye two and twentieth yeare of his Majestie's Raigne, that now is upon wch. information ye said Richard Drinkwater is convict before us for preaching and teaching in ye said conventicle and unlawful assembly, contrary to ye said Act of Parliament, wherefore we ye said Justices doe impose upon ye said Rich. Drinkwater as a fine for ye said offence ye sum of twenty pounds to be levied upon his goods and chattels according to ye said Act.—In witness, &c."

Heavy as was this punishment, it was doubled for a similar offence committed the same afternoon by the same preacher. At the same time William Cozens, the owner of the house, was fined £20 for both the morning and the afternoon services, and every other person present had to pay 5s. for each attendance. In the afternoon, however, John Collier, one of the congregation, also ventured to address the assembly, and he too was fined £20. The profession of Anabaptism was a costly business in those days, and it says much for the sturdy faith of these old Nonconformists that they suffered fine and imprisonment only to preach again. Such was the material of which the church in St. Thomas's Street was formed. Better days dawned with the Act of Toleration, and on the 27th January, 1693, St. Thomas's Street was openly used for public worship. Mr. Drinkwater continued a preacher 35 years, and died in 1712.

He was succeeded by Thomas Bowes, a farmer, of Hilsea, a man of great ability, and an acceptable preacher. He also suffered for conscience sake, and his cattle were driven away on several occasions in order to pay the fines and penalties imposed upon him as a Nonconformist. It was he who gave a lease for ninety-nine years of the garden and tenement of Widow Boulton for the erection of the chapel, for and on behalf of the congregation of baptised persons for the erection of a place for "the worship of Almighty God, to be used for no other purpose, save a school."[2]

The first trustees were six in number, one of whom was Edward Flower, of Eastney. Hence, perhaps, is the record that baptisms took place in a pond in an orchard at Eastney. In 1715 the chapel was built.

Mr. John Sturch, of Crediton, Devon, was the next minister, being appointed in 1742, and is the first who received remuneration for his services. He lived in the cottage of Mary Boulton, the widow, which eventually became the minister's house. John Bowes, the son of Thomas Bowes, was educated at Leyden, and, becoming a physician, he soon acquired wealth. It was by his aid that debts were paid off, and the chapel endowed, so that the cause for ever after might have the benefit of it. The Rev. D. Austen succeeded Mr. Sturch in 1761. To Mr. Mills, who followed him, Dr. Bowes left property for his own use.

In 1704 the second Baptist chapel was built (they held a more rigid faith at that time, being called Particular Baptists), and being now known as Kent Street Chapel, Portsea. The name "General Baptist" was adopted in 1766 by St. Thomas's Street Chapel.

In 1797 the Rev. John Kingsford was engaged as an assistant to Mr. Mills, and it was during his time (in 1799) that a division took place, with Mr. Kingsford going to a chapel in Clarence Street, Landport, since removed to Commercial Road. He was paid £30 a year for twenty years by St. Thomas's congregation. Mr. Mills resigned in 1812, and was succeeded by Mr. Joseph Brent, who continued minister here until his death in 1833. The Rev. Russell Scott frequently assisted him during his ministry. The Rev. Henry Hawkes (Mr. Scott's successor) preached on Sunday afternoons gratuitously until a successor was appointed in Mr. Brent's place, doing this for nearly three years, in addition to his own morning and evening services at the High Street Chapel.

The Rev. Thomas Foster was appointed minister in 1836. In 1857 the chapel was renovated and a new roof put on. In 1863 the Rev. E. R.

Grant was chosen assistant minister to Mr. Foster, who soon retired through infirmity. Mr. Grant was appointed successor to Mr. Foster. He became very popular, and it was found necessary to permanently enlarge the building to its present dimensions at a cost of £900, the old chapel forming the chancel. In 1870 Mr. Grant accepted a call from and removed to Maidstone, in Kent. He was succeeded by the Rev. John Ellis in 1871. A mortgage left on the building by Mr. Grant, Mr. Ellis tried, unsuccessfully, to remove, and it remained a standing burden on the church. Mr. Ellis resigned in 1881, and died in 1889. The Rev. J. Clarke ministered here about a year. The Rev. F. Wood followed for about eighteen months, and retired in July, 1886. Mr. Thomas Bond, of Hanover Street, Portsea, volunteered to supply gratuitously the pulpit for a period, until they were in a position again to retain the services of a regular minister, and has continued to conduct the services ever since. During his ministry the mortgage has been paid off, trusts renewed and consolidated, funds reinvested, property renovated, and religious life revived.

On the 31st March, 1893, the Two-hundredth Anniversary was held, much interest was excited thereby, a social and public meeting were held, and a large assemblage gathered on the occasion. Some of the particulars stated here were given at that gathering. J. A. B.

## North Cornwall.

An old traveller—one Gilpin, if we recollect aright—hearing at Launceston of the dreary moorlands beyond, begins to sing for the Saxon comforts of good roads and good inns, and brings his wanderings westwards to a close at the quaint old frontier town that winds up the steep slope which, crowned by the great border fortress of Castle Terrible, which looks proudly over the scanty, but famous Tamar. But Cornish roads and Cornish inns are in these days alike unexceptionable, and the breezy heaths of the highlands, the spacious solitudes, deep valleys, and rock-crowned heights that repelled our forefathers are accounted as attractions by ourselves. The inland scenery of North Cornwall, in propitious weather, is, indeed, by no means dreary; moor and vale, wide pastures, and broad cornlands, wooded dells, and open, fertile valleys continually succeed each other, and at every turn of the road a new and picturesque detail in the landscape discloses itself, while the whole is slowly changing. Nor is the scenery devoid of a certain grandeur. There are no high mountains, Row Tor and Brown Willie being both under fifteen hundred feet; but there is a sort of horizontal stupendousness in the main outlines of the surface-sculpture that is very impressive. Long, broad ridges, vast hogsbacks, and immense rounded knolls, often topped by rugged, rocky masses of granite, are separated by basin-like depressions, broad valleys, or narrower infoldings of the surface, which often, and especially near the coast, deepen into wooded ravines and streamy dells. Amid the fields and wastes and pastures are scattered at irregular intervals, clusters of white-walled, blue-roofed, strongly-built cottages and farmhouses—in the bottoms of spacious hollows, half-hid by trees, on hill sides, among broad pastures, more rarely on the crown of some knoll where the purple of the heather begins to overpower the green of the short, close grass. The whole country has the appearance of having suddenly welled up into fluid existence—all surfaces are more or less sloped or curved—and then solidified. The backbone of granite, which runs in a south-westerly direction between the middle line and western coast of Cornwall, has not suddenly but gradually heaved up in various degrees and directions the overlying strata of slaty rock; and the elevation has been greater, on the whole, in the northern than the southern division of the county, where the scenery is generally tamer, the granite dykes and overflows coming more frequently to the surface through and over the less resisting metamorphic rocks. The line of northern coast, from a similar cause, is generally loftier and grander than that of the Belerion end of the peninsula. The walk along the clifts from Bude to Boscastle is not to be paralleled throughout the long contour of the English coast. From Tintagel to Trebarwith, and from Pentire to Newquay, the bold waterworn headlands, alternating with high-cliffed coves and bays, often floored at low-water mark with spacious beeches of smooth yellow sand, picturesquely dotted

with scattered rocky masses and craggy outliers, offer an endless succession of the scenes Mr. Hook so loves to paint,—beetling cliffs of coarsely-laminar rock overhanging tumultuous humpy, billowy, clear green or blue seas, flecked with whirling masses and broken circling lines of snow-white foam, and displaying here and there a perilously steep slope or patch of emerald herbage, where a yoke or two of sheep are feeding, heedless of the dizzy depths below.

Here, as one watches the endless struggle between sea and coast, it is difficult not to ascribe a certain cruel craftiness to the eternally active and resistless element, that laps fawningly at the base of the great, patient cliffs, removing particle after particle of the rugged rock, until hollows are worn that deepen into caverns, lengthening slowly into passages or tunnels, that weaken the foundations of the apparently everlasting mass, and the first storm brings down the still frowning but honeycombed precipice in fragments and boulders, and mighty outliers to be afterwards reduced leisurely to atomic sand.

On this north-western trend of ocean-gnawed coast, Boscastle is the principal, if not the only haven. From the high upland pastures of which the greater part of the hundred of Lesneweth consists, a long gully, deepening and narrowing in its descent, winds steeply down to the sea, ending in a sort of miniature fiord, bent upon itself, which constitutes the strangest of English harbours. The town in part borders—in part clusters about the lower portion of the old road that for over two miles meanders in breakneck fashion from the Ven Down to the head of the port, where it crosses the purling trout-stream that has run its course down the pretty Minster Valley. Like most of the old Cornish towns, Boscastle has a curiously foreign air about it, despite the long supremacy of the Saxon in the northern portion of the county. Traces of the Teuton are evident enough in the population, though the prevailing cast of countenance is not Teutonic. Neither is it Celtic exactly, or at all events Kymric; in the women, in whom one expects to find the race-characteristics more permanent than in the men, there is a certain fineness of feature to which neither Goidel, Kymry, nor Teuton can lay claim. Some of the faces one sees recall, indeed, though faintly, the Ligurian type not uncommon along the Riviera.

Leland, writing in the sixteenth century, says:—"The toune of Boscastelle lyith upon the Brow of a rokky Hill by South Est, and so goith down by length to the Northe to the Se but not even ful hard to it." The description is as accurate as terse; but he adds, "it is a very filthy toune and il kept,"—a reproach it would be difficult to justify now. The "toune" could hardly be dirty if it would, for, unfortunately, it is no longer the "busy trading port" it was when Walter White visited it in 1854. With the death of the last "squire," its timber trade with Quebec, its malting and brewing, and its business generally, came to an end. The harbour is deserted, the row of offices where clerks scribbled of yore are empty, and two or three manure-depots and a coal-shed suffice for its imports, while exports it has few or none. Nor is it a centre of supply for the country around,—a need subserved by Camelford, which is within sixteen miles of Launceston and the iron-ways. But it is becoming more and more known to tourists as an excellent head-quarters for exploring the most picturesque district of North Cornwall, and its principal inn enjoys a well-merited reputation as one of the best in the country.

From Boscastle endless excursions may be made. Tintagel with its bold headland and ruined walls, rich with Arthurian memories, is within an hour's walk. The pretty straggling village, dear to artists, has now its great hotels. From the church a path leads along the range of magnificent cliffs to the picturesque cove and strand of Trebarwith. St. Knighton's or Nectan's Keeve and the beautiful Valley of Rocks may be visited on the way from Boscastle to Tintagel. Camelford, a good specimen of the old Cornish town, is distant an hour and a half's walk. The road leads over breezy uplands when once the great Boscastle hill has been climbed. The bay or cove of Pentargan is known to every artist, and the great caves are well worth examination. Bossinney, a little village, which, with Tintagel, formed a municipal borough, whose dozen or so of freemen returned two members to Parliament previous to the Reform Bill of 1832—Sir Francis Drake was returned by it to one of Elizabeth's

Parliaments—gives its name to a charming cove, which an old monk tried to convert into a harbour, where a strand of fine, smooth sand tempts to a bathe. In fine, the archæologist, the botanist, the geologist, or the non-ologist who simply loves the picturesque, may well spend a fortnight at Boscastle, and each day find something new to interest him, while the fatigued Londoner, anxious to renew his strength for the next year's work, may drink in health and vigour as often as he chooses to ramble over the breezy uplands, or pick his way along the high cliff-ledges, inhaling the keen airs that drift in from the broad Atlantic.

## Rough Notes of Bible Class Lessons for Senior Scholars.

III.—"The Idea of Right and Wrong."

We have the law of growth everywhere. The world not made perfect in the beginning—still in progress of making. The "Perfect Religion" and the perfect morality not given at the first. What we have in the Old Testament is a spiritual religion and a lofty morality *slowly becoming*, and not ready made and of precise dimensions.

But God not less God and not less wonderful because He works gradually rather than by sudden acts and motives.

So in the Bible the perfect morality is not in the beginning but at the end. Morality of Jacob lower than of Isaiah, David lower than Micah, Hezekiah lower than Paul. The law of the Bible is constant progress. So the Beatitudes are much loftier than the Ten Commandments.

But from the first there is a sense of Right and Wrong. What Right and Wrong are differs in different men and ages (see Matt. v. 43, 44).

I.—Note in the Bible the advance of Right and Wrong from Rules to Principles. The Rule—Loaf of bread. Principle—Handful of corn. Rules for childhood. Principles for manhood. So with human race. Illustrations of Rules in second and fourth Commandments: Rule—No graven image; Principle—No idolatry. Rule—One-seventh of time for God; Principle—All days for God! Right of way—Closing a road one day in the year (Rom. xiv. 5, 6; Col. ii. 16).

II.—Note the advance from the *Relative* to the *Absolute* in Right and Wrong. A great deal of morality relative—good for the child but not for the man, for the savage but not for the European, on board ship but not in the state. For instances:

1.—Revenge—Relative, Lex Talionis (Ex. xxi. 23—5, Lev. xxiv. 17—20). Forgiveness—Absolute (Matt. v. 38, Eph. iv. 32).

2.—Slavery (Lev. xxv. 39—55). Freedom (Luke xv.).

3.—Polygamy practised—Abraham (Gen. xvi. 1—3, Job xxvii. 15). Polygamy forbidden (Mark x. 2—10).

4.—Temptation from without (Gen. iii. 13). Temptation from within (James i. 14).

The morality of the Bible to be tested by what it arrives at in Jesus, and not by its previous stages of growth.

IV.—"The Idea of Worship."

1.—What is worship? Worship is Love, Trust, and Reverence.

2.—What is Christian worship? Love, Trust, and Reverence directed to God as interpreted by Christ.

3.—Have men any other objects of worship beside God? Yes, when they care for things, such as money, pleasure, power, or their children, more than God, they worship them.

4.—What other objects of worship had men in olden days? Stones, trees, rivers, serpents, animals, sun, moon, thunder, lightning, all the forces of nature.

5.—What was the essence of such worship? Fear. It had no love, nor trust, nor reverence.

6.—Are there any traces of these various objects of worship in the Bible? Yes. Stones (Gen. xxviii. 18, xxxi. 45—6; Isaiah lvii. 6; Jer. iii. 9; Hab. ii. 19). Trees (Gen ii. 9, 15—17; Deut. xvi. 21). Serpent (Gen. iii. 1; Num. xxi. 8; Ex. vii. 12). Sun and moon (Job xxxi. 26—8; Jer. xliv. 17).

7.—What traces of these objects of worship have we in our own language? In the names for the days of the week: Sunday (Sun worship), Monday (Moons-day), Tuesday (Tuisco—the sky—the all embracing), Wednesday (Wodin), Thursday (Thor's day), Friday (Freya), Saturday (Saturns day, or Setters day).

8.—What was essential to worship in olden days? Holy places, sacred rights, sacred persons,

external observances. Temple at Jerusalem. Mecca.

9.—What is the Christian idea of worship? All places holy, for God is everywhere. Places, forms, rites, persons, nothing. Love, trust, and reverence, everything. Worship in spirit (John iv. 20—24).

## A Woman's Thoughts about Silence.

Possibly the first masculine exclamation upon reading the title of this paper may be, "Pshaw! what can a woman know (save theoretically) about silence?" the conversational powers of the gentler half of creation having long been proverbial, and furthermore the subject of much gentle and ungentle criticism. It shall nevertheless be my object within these limits to strike, if possible, some fresh chords of thought concerning the wisdom, the blessing, and the infinite healing of silence, for there is among us an angel whose lips are sealed with everlasting quietude; whose wings make no rustling as he goes upon his beneficent journeyings; whose face is shrouded with a dusky veil, between the folds of which his kind eyes beam with inexpressible tenderness—one who is an angel in very deed and truth, and to whom men, owing much, heed little. He it is who restores life's jangled harmonies, who soothes earth's weary children, worn with the turmoil and struggle for daily existence; who beckons them into a holier atmosphere than otherwise it were possible for them to breathe, and guides them with a gentle hand to the gate of Heaven, and the footstool of God. Such is the mission of silence.

"Speech is silvern, but silence is golden," wrote one in long years past; whilst another, with quicker wit than wisdom methinks, observes: "Speech is silver, but silence is silver-plated brass." Each one to his own taste: I prefer the old-time version. There is too much bustle and noise in this nineteenth century, too much "talk," on all things in heaven and earth.

Too much talk, I have said—yes, even intellectual talk. We live in an age when university extension has produced a certain culture in circles where it was hitherto almost unknown, when even small villages have their debating societies; and far be it from me to depreciate these things. But oh! dear priests and priestesses of that which is to raise and elevate, forget not amid your debates and discussions, that thought is a delicate plant, and unless your minds are to be only faint reflections of others, you must be content sometimes with loneliness; you must go home to your "ain fireside," and let the "individual" grow nobler and better, assuredly, and it is possible, a more decided addition to the meeting "your soul loveth" for the touch of the Angel of Silence. . . . . Yes, leave for awhile that crowded gas-lit room, that young man in spectacles, who is about to read a botanical paper (and of its erudition who would doubt?), yes, leave him. Take one flower with you, and muse over its exquisite construction, its delicate stamens and slender pistil, its pure calyx, and fairy-like petals; and when you have realised its beauty and marvellous formation, you shall hear within your soul a still small voice whisper, "Is it not very good?" Ah! it is only in solitude that the education of the soul truly progresses; it is only when we shut out earth's busy noises, that we can echo the words of the great singer now at rest:

> God's in His heaven, all's right with His world.

Was not that life which has blessed beyond all measure the generations past, and which shall gloriously enrich the generations yet to come, developed within thirty almost silent years, amid the hills of Nazareth?

He comes to us with healing on his wings, this angel of silence; comes to the factory where swart mechanics knowing him not, yet feel the dreamy spell of his presence. Unconsciously, as the time of rest draws nearer, they have become themselves mere machines, instruments in the sinewy hands of a god whose limbs are of iron, his heart of steel, and his breath of steam.

> For all day the wheels are droning, turning,
> Their wind comes in our faces,
> Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
> And the walls turn in their places.

Hush! The huge masses of machinery cease to revolve, the tired feet file out through the corridors, until at length you might hear a pin drop in the deep calm. I have thought sometimes the world will wait like this, just ere the dawn of the resurrection morning, swathed in an ineffable peace, all the forces of Nature hushed like the pipes of a vast organ, which, worn with

much using, awaits the touch of the Divine Hand to restore its old-time harmonies, and cause it to be once more as it was "when the morning stars sang together and the Sons of God shouted for joy!"

He comes to the noisy crowd thronging the mart, to the chaffering thousands who believe most emphatically in the doctrine of "the weakest to the wall," bearing it out in their own experience with unblushing consistency. "Hush!" In the long watches of the night, when each home is wrapt in a quietude which seems audible, he who fears his accusing conscience stands alone with it, he who has been crushed perchance against the bare wretched wall of poverty, learns then to turn his face to the sun, and go onward with fresh courage. Oh, blessed angel of silence, leading both the erring soul and the weak into the King's ante-chamber, should we ever pause to look upward in the mad rush and struggle for existence were it not for thee?

But this same silence, mark you, is a wondrous test of love or friendship, and the rugged sage of Chelsea recognised it when he wrote, "For truly, as it has been written, 'Silence is divine and of heaven,' so in all earthly things there is a silence which is better than any speech." Who has not felt the delight of a mutual understanding, which is independent for the time of mere words to express its meaning? There is no embarrassment in such pauses, no weariness; for what would otherwise be a yawning gulf of stillness, is bridged over by the golden span of love. Nay; shall I go farther, and say that while mortals wait thus, fresh links, and stronger, are gradually formed in the chains which knit heart to heart, and soul to soul? Not alone doth this apply to earthly happiness. There is a sympathy in sorrow which is the more tender in that it is also voiceless. When life seems clouded over, or a wave of bereavement has swept through the home, leaving it utterly desolate, is it the talkative acquaintance who is most welcome? I trow not. He was well enough in our hours of gladness, when we were as other men; but now, when an invisible barrier seems to have arisen between us and the outer world, we can only clasp the hand that is silently offered, and look into our quiet friend's kindly eyes, over-brimming with a tenderness which is more acceptable than the richest floods of human eloquence. Some delicate, inward perception withholds him from preaching "resignation, or speaking of the healing which time only can bring." He is aware that it is unnecessary for him or anyone to tell us of these things, that the grass will indeed grow in due season over new-made graves, but that just now it is the most blessed thing to be "left alone." Dear, quiet friend! That close hand-clasp of his stays with us through the shadowed days and the sleepless nights, and the tender eyes still seem to be saying: "If I could but bear the burden for you; if I only could."

So sweet a silence ministered,
God used it for a word.

FRANCES HURRELL.

## Ralph the Peacemaker.

### A COUNTRY IDYLL.

The evening meal is finished, and my husband and I sit down before the fire to spend the most enjoyable part of the day. He, after the manner of his kind, unfolds the newspaper and buries his face behind it. My fingers are soon busy with bright-coloured fancy work. Edward affects to despise this occupation, though he never fails to remind me when a new pair of slippers are wanted. For half-an-hour nothing is heard but the click of the needle and rustle of the newspaper. Ralph, a venerable retriever, stretched upon the hearth-rug, becoming weary of the monotony, rises and places his large intelligent head upon my lap, looking up with kind expressive brown eyes. He has come for a little petting, and gets it to his heart's content. Good old Ralph! though your curly black coat is sprinkled with gray, you are still a prime favourite in the household, and have easy times under an indulgent mistress. Reader, you will scarcely wonder that we regard him with such affection, when you learn what a valuable service he once rendered us.

It was some years ago, in the days of my maidenhood. My father's home was a pretty sheltered villa, outside the little town of G——. From the windows, we could see across a few meadows the clear water of the river; and beyond, through the distant trees, the delicate

spire of a church. It formed a beautiful rural picture, the fresh green of the foliage undimmed by the smoke of factories. At the other end of the town lived Edward Drayton—the same individual who sits there silently reading his newspaper—who worked busily from morning to night in a musty office. We seldom met during the week; but with unflinching regularity he called for me every Sunday afternoon. In summer, when the bright sunshine invited every living creature to delight in the warm rays, we would stroll arm-in-arm through the meadows and wander by the side of the river. Ralph always accompanied us.

How the hours fled past as we sat and watched the martins skimming over the surface, or read what were to us the most interesting of love stories in one another's eyes! This courtship had lasted several months, when a foolish quarrel threatened to break our engagement off altogether. The cause was trivial in itself, and I now wonder how we can ever have let such a thing trouble us; but unfortunately lovers are much given to misunderstanding one another. Each of us had a considerable share of pride, too much at all events to make the first overtures of peace. Gloomily we nursed our resentment during the week. Twice had we met in the street, and passed without a word. Did his heart throb like mine, I wonder, and a plea for forgiveness rise to his lips? If it did, he allowed the opportunity to pass unimproved. Sunday came round again. Only one week had elapsed since the quarrel, but oh! how the days had dragged by; what a weary, weary time it had been! The afternoon was bright and sunny. A delicious south wind tempered the summer heat. No ring at the bell announced the welcome notice, "Mr. Drayton to see you, Miss." Lonely and sick at heart, I strolled out into the meadows. I noticed not that the ground was carpeted with buttercups, and the air full of the hum of insects; the bitter reflections within excluded all else. The stile was reached, the smooth, comfortable old stile near the river, where someone had always before been so ready to assist; but he was not here to-day, and the mere thought caused the pent-up tears to burst forth. Sitting down beneath a gnarled oak hard by, I laid my face in my hands and sobbed piteously. Presently, Ralph's joyous bark aroused me from the painful reverie. Looking up, I saw bending over me the dear object of my regrets, who said, as he gave a reconciling kiss: "Ralph has brought me to you, and taught us both a wholesome lesson."

True enough, the sagacious dog had played the part of peacemaker. I remembered seeing him follow me from the house, but had been too absorbed to notice his disappearance. Some reflection like this must have passed through his canine imagination: "My mistress goes out alone, sad and unhappy; formerly, she had some one with her, and the result was different; let me run and fetch the third person, and doubtless we shall all three be glad together."

Whether such were his thoughts or not, he trotted off to the other end of the town, and called at the Draytons' house. He found Edward sitting disconsolately in the garden, pretending to read. Ralph placed his forepaws on Edward's knees and gave a short, enquiring kind of bark; then started off towards the gate, returned, and almost as plainly as words could have done, requested to be followed. Nothing loath to lay aside the book, and wondering what the dog could want, Edward rose, and started along the path. Ralph's joy knew no bounds; with barks of delight, he ran ahead, turning every now and then to wait for his companion. Thus had he brought the repentant lover to the field where his mistress sat sobbing beneath the oak tree. And there Ralph now stood, holding forth eloquently with his tail, and something almost like a quiet smile lurking about the corners of his mouth.

In honour of the occasion, a little wren hopped out of her moss-roofed cottage on the bough above, and burst forth into a flood of high-pitched music. Her throat swelled, and her tiny lungs worked bravely, as the song grew into a passion of shrill melody. That song was the precursor of a peal of bells!

As some return for the gratitude we owe to Ralph it is our delight to treat him as a worthy aged retainer. All his wants are supplied with affectionate care, the troubles of advanced years being smoothed away as far as possible.

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The last act of life—"I shall die alone"—is always tragical.

# THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

## The Child and the Fairy.

"O say, little Thumbikin, where do you dwell?"—
"Sometimes on the mountain; sometimes in the dell;
Sometimes on the heath, and sometimes in the corn;
Sometimes in the chamber where babies are born.
Now hither, now thither; the hall or the cell:
But where it is moonlight—I best love to dwell."

"O say, little Thumbikin, what do you eat?"—
"The purest of honey yields me the best meat;
I suck from the cups of the choicest of flowers;
I rob the wild bee when he's laboured for hours.
A mushroom my table, and dew for my wine,
What mortal can equal my feast when I dine?"

"O say, little Thumbikin, what's your employ?"—
"I soothe little babies when pain makes them cry;
I bring pleasant dreams to their fancy in sleep,
I romp with good boys, and I run and I leap.
Sometimes as a hare or a pony I'm seen;
Sometimes as a housemaid I sweep the floor clean.

I punish the naughty; the idle ones scare;
And love to see goodness abound everywhere.
And you, little worldling, who ask me these things,
If you're good, will possess all that goodness still brings;
For goodness will ever bear with it a charm;
And Thumbikin never does good children harm."

J. R.

## The Blacksmith's Song.

"STRIKE, WHILE THE IRON'S HOT."

(*Translated from an old French Song.*)

Through the casement, roseate Dawn
Already steals with cheering ray:
Let's to the forge, and wake the morn
With boist'rous voice and jocund lay!

Bellows, blow; and furnace, smoke;
Bend the glowing metal soon!
Hammer, fall with telling stroke!—
Sing to my anvil's merry tune,
Pong, Pong—
"Strike, while the Iron's hot!"

With lusty stroke my hammer rings:
Strike hard! 'tis for yon chubby Boy
Who to his mother fondly clings,
And trills his cooing note of joy.

Thanks to the sweat that bathes my face,
The paths of Learning he shall tread,
And Knowledge make her dwelling-place
Within my darling's fair young head!
Pong, Pong—
"Strike, while the Iron's hot."

Now all who day by day pursue
Some darling hope, some cherished end—
Old hearts, who have but power in view;
Young hearts, who Love's soft call attend;

Men, who would wield the sword or pen—
Sages and fools—peasants and kings—
If you'd succeed, take as the word
Of wisdom, what my anvil rings:
Pong, Pong, Pong!
"Strike, while the Iron's hot."

## Lines upon a Caged Lark.

A cruel deed
It is, sweet bird, to cage thee up
Prisoner for life, with just a cup
And box of seed,
And sod to move on barely one foot square,
Hung o'er dark street, midst foul and murky air.

From Freedom brought,
And robbed of every chance of wing,
Thou couldst have had no heart to sing,
One would have thought.
But though thy song is sung, men little know
The yearning source from which those sweet notes flow.

Poor little bird!
As often as I think of thee,
And how thou longest to be free,
My heart is stirred,
And, were my strength but equal to my rage,
Methinks thy cager would be in his cage.

The selfish man!
To take thee from thy broader sphere,
Where thousands heard thy music clear,
On Nature's plan;
And where the listening landscape far and wide
Had joy, and thou thy liberty beside.

A singing slave
Made now; with no return but food;
No mate to love, nor little brood
To feed and save;
No cool and leafy haunts: the cruel wires
Chafe thy young life and check thy just desires.

Brave little bird!
Still striving, with thy sweetest song,
To melt the hearts that do thee wrong,
I give my word
To stand with those who for thy freedom fight,
Who claim for thee that freedom as thy right.

A. B.